Flying Snake

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Flying Dog · Chinese skeletons in Roman tombs · Elephant Remains at Sea . Ghost Bicycle . King Henry VIII`s Sea Monster . Human Skeletons in Trees . Giant Snail . South American Plesiosaur . Fox Skeleton in a Tree . Thylacine News . And More!

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Image on front cover kindly supplied by Dr Karl Shuker. Front cover of sheet music for the *El Plesiosaurio* tango (Public domain)

Dr Devo`s Diary

Wey hey hey! Welcome to another edition of Flying Snake , your friendly neighbourhood Fortean zoology and cryptozoology magazine. I am sorry about its absence of about a year. (I haven`t counted exactly how many months nor am I pleased with the situation. To cut a long and tedious story short, I no longer have a home computer or similar device of any sort, but the silver lining to this ominous anomalous grey cloud is that I am now using Microsoft Publisher instead of Serif Page Plus software on other computers to create Flying Snake, which, apart from Dr Devo not having the faintest idea why or how, does simplify creating the magazine to a huge extent without losing any content features.) I hope the long passage of time since Flying Snake # 11 is more than made up for by this smorgasbord (I love that word) of cryptozoological stories of varying degrees of weirdness. Please though do not read about ghost bicycles or sea-bound dead elephants whilst intoxicated by some peculiar alcoholic concoction or home brew, as I do not want to be held accountable for the sad results! Personally I think this the best issue to date (as it should be given that it`s taken about 12 months to collate and type out the information!) I also have frogs in birds nests, as a place of habitation not victims or food for birds. A flying dog, new spiders in Australia, the natterjack toad in Ireland, the chupacabra being an essay by Spanish correspondent Javier Resines, the Patagonian plesiosaur by Dr Karl Shuker, a collection of old newspaper stories on human skeletons discovered in trees sent by Loes Modderman and much more. I need to also add, that sometime hopefully before the end of 2017 Flying Snake will begin to appear as an e-book, hosted by Jon Downes. The advantage of this is that you can read it for free in full colour, but those who want to buy a hard copy version will still be able to do so. Meanwhile, ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!

In Pursuit of The Patagonian Plesiosaur

Emailed by Dr Karl Shuker to Mr Richard Muirhead
for *Flying Snake* on 7 May 2017

Several lake-dwelling cryptids of the long-necked persuasion have been reported from South America down through the years. However, the most publicised of these freshwater mystery beasts was unquestionably the so-called Patagonian plesiosaur, which at the height of its fame even received coverage in the august journal *Scientific American.*

In January 1922, Dr Clementi Onelli, Director of Buenos Aires Zoo in Argentina, received a letter from a Texan adventurer called Martin Sheffield, who had spent a number of years as an itinerant prospector living off the land in Patagonia. In his letter, Sheffield claimed that some nights previously, after pitching his hunting camp close to a mountain lake near Esquel, he had encountered a strange animal:

"...in the middle of the lake, I saw the head of an animal. At first sight it was like some unknown species of swan, but swirls in the water made me think its body must resemble a crocodile`s."

Not surprisingly, Sheffield`s description conjured up images of plesiosaurs in Onelli`s mind, and also reminded him of a somewhat earlier report. In 1897, he had spoken to a farmer living on the shores of Patagonia`s White Lake, who informed him that a strange noise was frequently heard there at night, resembling the sound that a cart would make if dragged over the lake`s pebbly shore — but that was not all. On moonlight nights, a huge beast could be seen in the lake,

with a long reptilian neck that would rise high above the water, unless disturbed — whereupon it would instantly dive and disappear into the depths.

Heartened by these and other reports, Onelli organised an expedition to follow them up, which duly set forth on 23 March 1922, led by José Cihagi, superintendent of Buenos Aires Zoo. It eventually reached the lake where Sheffield had experienced his sighting, but with the approach of winter further explorations were abandoned and the expedition returned to Buenos Aires. Interestingly, Sheffield had also previously contacted former American president Theodore Roosevelt concerning the swan-necked beast that he had seen in the mountain lake. As a result of this,Roosevelt, who was famed for his hunting skills, had apparently pondered over whether to launch a search for it himself, but he never actually did so, and he died in 1919, three years before Onelli`s expedition set out.

And so it was that apart from a jaunty tango entitled *El Plesiosaurio* (composed in 1922 by Rafael D`Agostino, with lyrics by Amilcar Morbidelli, and sheet music depicting on its cover a caricature of Onelli riding a plesiosaur) plus a brand of cigarettes also named after it, nothing else emerged regarding the putative plesiosaur of Patagonia for many years — until the 1980s. Since then, however, numerous reports have been aired by the media concerning a similar water beast, nicknamed Nahuelito, which is said to inhabit Nahuel Huapi, a 204 - square - mile Argentinian lake ensconced amid the Andes winter-sport resort of Bariloche.

Auyan-tepui is a lofty tepui (table mountain) in Venezuela, one of the inspirations for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle`s classic cryptozoological novel *The Lost World* - an exciting work of fiction in which the plateau at the summit of one such tepui is populated by dinosaurs,

pterosaurs, plesiosaurs, and other prehistoric survivors. In 1955,however, during an expedition to Auyan-tepui, naturalist Alexander Laime allegedly sighted some creatures that gave the more optimistic zoologists reason for believing that the theme of Conan Doyle`s novel may not be wholly fictitious after all.

While searching for diamonds in one of the rivers at the summit of this isolated tepui, Laime spied three very strange beasts sunbathing on a rocky ledge above the water. Superficially seal-like, closer observation revealed that they had reptilian faces with disproportionately long necks, and two pairs of scaly flippers. Drawings that he made of them at that time are reminiscent of plesiosaurs. There is, however,one very unexpected feature - none of them was more than 3ft long.

Could they have been young specimens? Laime believed that they were adults, but belonging to some pygmy species of plesiosaur, whose small size has enabled it to persist into the present day without disturbing the ecological balance of this enclosed system. More conservative opinions favour some long-necked type of otter as a more plausible identity, whereas others have likened them to a crocodile.

In 1990, Auyan-tepui played host to an expedition led by biologist Fabian Michelangeli and including scientific reporter Uwe George, for whom this was his sixth exploration of a South American tepui. During their visit, Michelangeli and his brother Armando spied a silhouette of a beast closely resembling those reported by Laime, but as they drew nearer to investigate, the beast plunged into the river and disappeared from view. As for various German TV reports claiming that one had actually been captured, these were inspired by the procurement of nothing more spectacular than a common species of lizard. So for now, at least, we have only the distant refrain of a long-forgotten tango to remind us of how a US President had almost set forth in South America to seek a putative prehistoric survivor.

Human skeletons in trees

Loes Modderman and Richard Muirhead

Here are a selection of stories passed on to me by Dutch Fortean researcher Loes Modderman. Unfortunately I could not read all of them thoroughly due to the poor quality of my print-outs, but I have done the best I can. The dates and names of some of the newspapers are missing.

Skeleton found in a tree

Much speculation as to how the body got there.

Guthrie, Oklahoma., May 6 — Charles Gibson of Eufaula tells a story of a skeleton recently found in a large hollow tree east of Eufaula which has enough mystery connected with it to keep Sherlock Holmes busy for several weeks .

The tree had been snapped off about fifteen feet above the ground and was hollow from the top. Some men cut it down recently and found at the bottom of the cylindrical space a bleached human skeleton, which had evidentally been there for several years.

There is much speculation as to how the body became imprisoned in the tree . One theory is that a man, while hunting squirrels, climbed to the top and fell into the trunk, where he became wedged in and died of starvation. Others believe the man was murdered and that his slayers threw his body into the hollow tree to conceal their crime.

FIND SKELETON IN A TREE

Coudersport, Pennsylvania, Jan 9 — The body of Leon Coylde, age twenty-three , who disappeared last spring following a quarrel with his wife, was found in a tree near the New York state line under conditions which seem to indicate that the man committed suicide under peculiar conditions. The body, or skeleton, was hanging by the head in the fork of a tree. Hunters who found the remains believe the man used the crotch in lieu of a noose to hang himself.

SKELETONS IN A TREE.

A few days ago Mr. Fred King, manager of Bulliwallah station, near Clermont (Queensland), discovered in a horse paddock at the station a hollow tree containing two human skeletons. The tree was recently blown down, and Mr. King collected the remains, which, he states, appear to be those of an aboriginal man and woman. He estimates that they have been in that position for about 30 years. Death may have occurred in a tribal fracas, for both skulls bear marks which appear to have been caused by steel tomahawks. Mr. King mentions that the station site was a regular camping ground for members of the Belyando tribe of blacks in the old days, and that he never heard of any disappearance during the 15 years his family owned the station. Inspector O'Connor, commenting on the statement, said that tree burial was quite a common thing among natives.

Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser (Australia) August 17th 1927.

Finds skeleton on Christmas tree

Portland , Dec 24th (Year unknown.)

H.A. Mc-Clements and his six year old son were looking for a Christmas tree in the woods back of Linnton. The child pointed .” There`s a nice one , daddy.” McClements walked closer. He found the skeleton of a man dangling from another limb. The coroner said the body was that of a Japanese. He had been dead several months. He had knotted a cloth about his neck, tied the loose end to the branch and, apparently, had leaned against the noose until his breath was cut off.

Skeleton in a hollow tree

ATLANTA, Ga., Jan 21, 1886. Three men, named George S. Sanders, Henry Gibson and Henry De Grushe, live in Milton county, twenty-five miles from Atlanta. Twelve days ago they started out to search for some strayed horses and mules, and reached Atlanta this afternoon. Three nights ago they prepared to camp in the woods about eighteen miles from the city, and one of them felled an old hollow tree for fuel. The fall burst open the trunk , and the man was horrified to see mouldering human bones in the opening. He summoned his companions , and they made a closer examination.

A MYSTERY OF THE FOREST

The skeleton was lying with its head toward the top of the tree. An old pocket knife was found in the bottom of the hollow stump. On the

inside of the tree, about the height of a man`s shoulders from the ground, were a few indistinct marks cut into the wood, resembling letters or figures. On one side of the tree a small, round hole had been cut entirely through, about the size of a silver dollar. Both blades to the knife were broken off, but only one could be found. The travellers gathered a few of the half decayed bones, the knife and the blade, and cut from the tree pieces of wood bearing the letters and figures. These are now at Police Headquarters, where it is hoped to make something intelligible out of the characters on the chips or blocks of wood. The letters "Bu" and the figure "8" could be traced but that was all.

The theory is that the poor wretch was some early pioneer, and being overtaken in the woods by pursuing Indians, climbed to the top of the tree and squeezed himself into the opening, slipped, fell, and was a captive in a strange and narrow prison….(Remainder of text missing.)

Another entombed skeleton

Name of newspaper missing.

From a tree of this kind a large block , about eighteen inches in diameter, that had been knocking about in various yards and woodsheds was split up lately, and in it was found an anger (sic) hole three-fourths of an inch in size, containing a bunch of human hair done in a piece of printed paper. The hair was near the center of the block and fastened with a pine plug. It was apparently put in when the tree had grown over the plug to the thickness of about four inches, with the grain perfectly smooth and straight.

A natural curiosity was shown in a timber merchants workshop. This

was the nest and skeleton of a bird imbedded in a piece of beech. The timber seemed quite sound all round the cavity, and there was no sign of any aperture into it; but the timber being sawn up, the nest with the bird sitting upon it was found. The nest appeared to be built with mud, and the bird resembled a tit– mouse. Probably at the lopping of a branch a cavity was formed and the outside subsequently grown over; but how the bird was enclosed seems difficult to imagine.

In the center of a log of Honduras, mahogany, the saw revealed a large piece of honeycomb. The finder says the wax with the cells was hard, and resembled in color the appearance of a mummy. The remains of the bees were encrusted in the wax…"

Northern Star (New South Wales) November 26th 1909

SKELETON IN A TREE.

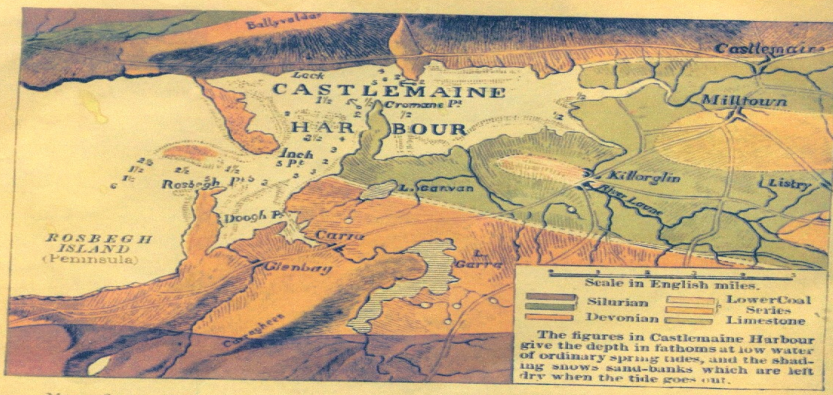
A discovery has been made near Mold, Flintshire, which recalls an incident of Mr. James Payn's novel "Lost Sir Massingberd," in which Sir Massingberd falls into a hollow tree and starves to death. In a field near Mold a man's jacket was seen protruding from an opening in the trunk of a hollow oak tree. By the light of bicycle lamps a hole was cut in the trunk, and through it a man's skeleton and clothing were drawn out. Papers on the clothing showed that the remains were those of Mr. Griffith Hughes, brother of Mr. Ellis Hughes, landlord of the Ruthin Castle public-house, Mold. It is not known how he came by his death, or how long the skeleton had been in the tree, but Mr. Hughes was last seen at Mold in June. A year or two ago he lost his wife and daughter within a month, and when he visited Mold he often talked of his boyhood days and how he used to climb down this particular tree in search of owls' nests. It is supposed that he had a longing to see the tree again, and lowered himself down the hollow trunk as he used to do when a boy. He must have been unable to release himself, and died from exhaustion or starvation. His shouts would not have been heard, as the tree is would not have been heard, as the tree is about six feet in depth, and the skeleton was found feet downwards. At the inquest an open verdict was returned.

The Natterjack toad in Ireland

Richard Muirhead

In early 2017 I came across an article in The Intellectual Observer Vol 5 1864 pp 228 – 233 (via Biodiversity Heritage Library) titled `The Natterjack Toad in Ireland` by Mrs Ward which I reproduce in full on the following pages. I presume this text ,being so old, is now out of copyright restrictions. The scientific name for the Natterjack Toad is Bufo calamita or Epidalea calamita. The image on page 228 of this issue of The Intellectual Observer is reproduced on page 13 of this issue of Flying Snake. The article itself in on the pages below. (There may be some missing text in the original between the bottom of pages 229 - 230.)

Dorsal side of a Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*) male specimen. Wikipedia Commons



Map of a small portion of the County of Kerry, showing the district in which the Natterjack Toad is found indigenous.

Natterjack Toad (Bufo Calamita) from Co. Kerry.

Delightful colour illustration showing the location of the Natterjack Toad in Ireland and the toad itself. From page 228 of `The Natterjack Toad in Ireland`by Mrs Ward. Apologies for the slant!

THE INTELLECTUAL OBSERVER.

MAY, 1864.

THE NATTERJACK TOAD IN IRELAND.

BY THE HON. MRS. WARD.

(*With a Coloured Plate.*)

My object in the following remarks on the Natterjack Toad in Ireland is to present to the reader, in a tangible form, a little information which has apparently remained latent for a long time, not reaching the general public, so far as I am aware, and certainly not becoming known to myself till about a year ago, when I learned it in various accidental ways.

A paragraph appeared in a Dublin daily newspaper, the *Irish Times*, on October 1st, 1862, headed "Irish Toads and their use." It stated that the rarer British toad (*Bufo calamita*) is an inhabitant of certain districts in the county of Kerry. "These Irish toads," continued the writer, "are very pretty creatures, utterly devoid of that cold slime and general ugliness which render frogs an object of aversion. They are quiet little beings, and are readily tamed;" and it was added that they would be found very useful in a greenhouse, being expert destroyers of *aphides* and other insects. I did not agree with the writer's denunciation of the frogs; but I was greatly interested in the statement about the natterjack toad being found in Ireland, as it tended to confirm an anecdote which I had heard in England two months previously. I wrote to ask the editor on what authority the existence of *Bufo calamita* in Kerry was stated.

In reply I was referred to the work of Dr. Charles A. Cameron, M.R.I.A., a *Guide to the Royal Zoological Gardens, Phœnix Park*,* where, at p. 46, I read, "The common toad, (*Bufo vulgaris*) is a native of England, but is never met with in Ireland, its place being occupied by the natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), which, however, is exceedingly rare, and confined to the county of Kerry." The proprietor of the *Irish Times*

* M'Glashan and Gill, Dublin, 1861.

stripe along the back appearing more strongly conspicuous. Flies, grasshoppers, beetles, and the larvæ of insects are their general food, which they take (only when the object is in motion) by darting their tongue with astonishing rapidity and precision. Their note is a pleasing chirp; but in the breeding season at night they keep a continued and confused noise, like to the action of a number of spinning-wheels. Strangers that visit Rosbegh during the bathing season do not like occupying the cottages near to the beach, being alarmed at the nightly pranks of these lively but harmless little creatures.* The peasantry have the greatest horror and even dread of them, and on my expressing my astonishment (at the Dingle side) at the number of those reptiles congregated about Rosbegh, was readily answered [in Irish]—

> "Wild Iveragh of the blue dragons,
> Glencar, in which no corn ever grew,
> And the high and horrid hills to the west of Desmond,
> All which Saint Patrick never thought worth blessing.

"It appears that Saint Patrick in all his visitations through Ireland, never blessed Iveragh with his presence, his nearest approach being to a bridge east of that district, not far from Killorglin. The Iveragh people console themselves by saying that the Saint, standing on the bridge, stretched forth his arms to them exclaiming—

> 'I bless ye to the west of me, and it is as well as if I travelled through.'"

Iveragh, I should explain, is a barony in the county of Kerry, situate immediately to the west of Glanbehy and the mountain of Curragheen, and including the peninsula, or, as it is usually styled, the *island* of Rosbegh, which, as Mr. Andrews states, "was formerly separated from the mainland; but Lord Headley's extensive improvements have converted marshes and sands, that the tide once widely covered, into rich pastures where hundreds of cattle now graze."

At the close of his lecture, Mr. Andrews said that he had received the utmost kindness and attention from the coastguard officers at Dingle and Ferriter's Cove, as well as from the men of the coastguard generally in that district; and this remark leads me to the other pieces of information which I possess, and for which I am indebted to one of the last mentioned officers, Mr. Ross Townsend, now residing at Balbriggan.

Soon after I had received the information conveyed in the old copy of *Saunders's News-Letter*, I happened (craftily) to ask a distinguished Irishman, "Are there any toads in Ireland?"

* I am told by Mr. Andrews that the natterjacks astonished these strangers not only by their whirring noise, but also by actually entering the ground-floors of the cottages, and climbing over the furniture.

"Oh! surely not," he answered, but on reflection added, "by the bye, there must be, for I have seen a whole boat's crew of them." He directed me to a place where I might hear of them, and after some inquiries I made them out in Dublin at No. 20, Molesworth Street.

What a sight, to be sure, with the subject of the natterjack toad in my thoughts! There I saw no less than forty-five of these creatures, cleverly stuffed, mounted in a case containing a well modelled sea, with boats and background; the toads being employed as the *dramatis personæ* in a species of marine entertainment or regatta. I confess to having felt a qualm of sorrow at first seeing them, similar to that with which the "Wurtemburg animals" inspired me in 1851, and especially the comic frogs, which seemed to me to quote Esop, and say, "It is sport to you, but it is death to us," while I felt inclined to answer, "It is *not* sport to me; I like you better alive and well;" but this feeling got over, how interesting to observe the peculiar "mesial stripe" of the natterjack, displayed on every broad back; and how forcibly the abundance in which these creatures are found is set forth by the numbers here congregated, varying from about half-an-inch in breadth to dimensions surpassing those of a full-grown frog. The group belongs to Sir James Dombrain, and the toads, as I afterwards ascertained, were prepared by Mr. Ross Townsend, who rightly judged that this mode of presenting them to view was likely to attract notice to the fact of their occurrence in Ireland.

One of my friends kindly wrote to him, at my request, for some information; this he gave fully in reply, and I shall presently transcribe it from his letters. I have prepared the little map (see coloured plate) especially to illustrate Mr. Townsend's remarks. It is taken from the "General Map of Ireland [scale four miles to an inch] to accompany the report of the Railway Commissioners, showing the principal physical features and geological structure of the country." These particulars, even to the depth of the water in and near Castlemaine harbour, I have copied with a view of presenting as much as possible to the eye.

"You will perceive," writes Mr. Townsend," that the harbour [of Castlemaine] is formed inside the bar by Rosbegh Point on the south side, and by Inch Point on the north. In the circle of this harbour, from Inch Point on the north, round to Rosbegh Point on the south, passing Lack, Castlemaine, Milltown, Killorglin and Cromane, in all these places toads are to be found in great abundance. The soil is generally of a light turf mould, or sand marsh; in both of these they delight to keep, as the soil is easily penetrated, and they can get covering for themselves in the winter." Mr. Townsend goes

on to say, that Mr. Andrews in his ramble in Kerry had spent some time with him at Lack and Killorglin. "In one of our excursions," he continues, "on a salt marsh on Rosbegh Point, we found the first toad [the place marked by a *red dot* on my map]—at least the first which was known to be such in that part of the country. Mr. Andrews told me that the late Mr. Thompson of Belfast, who was a naturalist of great research, had mentioned the existence of toads in Kerry as far back as 1805; but the best informed of the people of Kerry at the time I speak of—1841*—did not know of their existence, as the country people called them 'Black frogs.'

"The species I am now describing is the natterjack toad; you will see its specific character, as known in England, described fully in Bell's *History of British Reptiles*, published in 1849; but Mr. Bell was not then aware of this species being found in Ireland. The natterjack toad is never found in those localities I have mentioned more than a quarter of a mile from the sea-shore; but all round the harbour of Castlemaine, which you may see is of considerable extent, they are exceedingly numerous, and from the month of April until September they could be gathered in dozens, as they go forth creeping, or rather running from one locality to another; they make a whirring noise during the evening and night, when some thousands of throats are employed at once, and which I have heard on a calm night more than two miles at sea." Mr. Townsend adds, that on one occasion he removed a few dozens of them to a coastguard station, north-east of Dingle, that is to say, some miles west of Inch Point, and though he remained there twelve months, he never could trace one of them, although the soil he selected for them was exactly like that from which he took them.

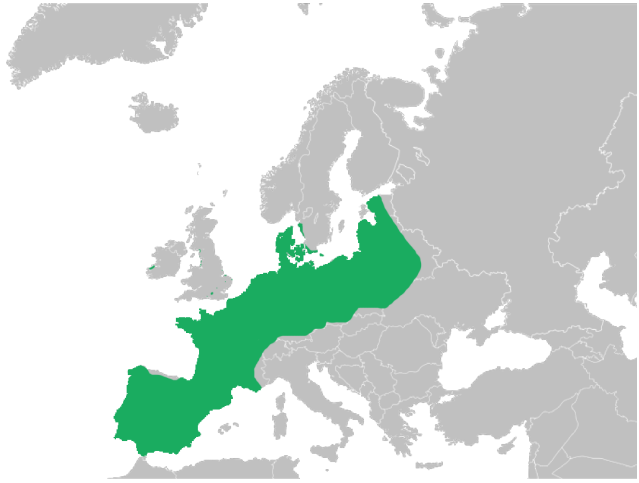
The simultaneous disappearance and power of concealment exemplified by these toads, correspond closely with some anecdotes given by Mr. Couch in the INTELLECTUAL OBSERVER for September, 1863; and their aptitude for escaping, which Mr. Couch narrates, was proved, I much regret to say, by the little natterjack whose likeness heads this article. It buried itself in November in a mixture of sand and peat (or as we say, turf-mould) which I had carefully prepared for it in a wooden box, over which the hand-frame was placed, the corners of the box being, as I thought, securely stuffed with moss, wedged down with pieces of slate. Nevertheless it escaped; for when its non-appearance in spring caused me to make a regular search for it, first in the box, and then in the whole room, I had the vexation of finding it dead and dried to a mummy in a distant corner.

* 1840 in Mr. Townsend's letter; but the newspaper appears to fix the date in the following year.

The desire for escaping appears to be a constant habitude of the natterjack, and its powers both of burrowing and climbing cause it to rival Baron Trenck in the success of its endeavours. Mr. Andrews kept some specimens for years in his garden at Rathmines, near Dublin, and has observed that nothing but high walls, with deeply laid foundations, will avail to secure them. Three or four natterjacks will assist three or four more to climb by generously allowing their shoulders to be used as ladders: these creatures piling themselves one on another, like Chinese tumblers, and actively holding on to the smallest inequalities of the wall.

Mr. Townsend concludes his letter by repeating the legendary story of St. Patrick, which he gives to nearly the same effect as Mr. Andrews did, adding, however, that the persons who told it to him had no idea that toads inhabited their neighbourhood. But, surely, we need not complain of the exceptions which present themselves to the non-existence of reptiles in this Green Isle. If the word of promise in this matter be broken to the ear, surely it is fulfilled to the hope; we have no colony of snakes, no lurking adders, although we now and then meet with the sand lizard; are plentifully supplied with the frog and smooth-newt, and possess in Kerry—and possibly elsewhere in Ireland—an isolated party of the harmless NATTERJACK TOAD.

Below: Range map of *Epidalea calamita* in 2010. By Osado. Wikipedia Creative Commons



Frogs found in bird`s nests

Richard Muirhead

I have been collecting stories of frogs found in bird`s nests, most certainly an odd place for them to turn up, cosy nevertheless! Perhaps they find their way there, or are taken there by birds for food? Not particularly strange but Fortean nevertheless. Here below is a story from Country Life October 28th 1982 page 1327.

Frog in a nest

Sir, I was recently about to give one of my box bushes its annual clipping ,but before doing so, wanted to make sure a dunnock that had nested there had hatched off her eggs and flown with her young. Quietly pulling back the box branches, I discovered that the bird and her young had gone, but the nest was now occupied by a common frog, which was squatting in it.

The nest is some 3ft from the ground , and while I understand that both toads and natterjacks can climb, is it not rare for common frogs to do so? Both hedgehogs and grass snakes are also visitors to my garden, and in each case are predators of common frogs, so perhaps the frog was hoping to escape them - E.L. JENNINGS, 20 Eastgtae Road, Tenterden,Kent.

[John F.Burton writes: I have never encountered common frogs anywhere except on the ground, or in the water of course. As Mr Jennings mentions, common toads can climb; I watched one climbing over

thick vegetation in my garden this July. I can only suggest that a dense box bush provides plenty of footholds for a frog and that a dunnock`s nest would provide a safe retreat - ED.]

Above: frog in a bird`s nest in Greece. See http://www.greece.com/photos/destinations/Peloponnese/Ilia/Village/Kato_Samiko/frog_in_bird%27s_nest/29908049 by antreas05 Location is Archea Olimpia. (Exact date unknown.)

Country Life October 27th 1983

Sir - "I refer to the letter under the above title (October 28, 1982) .We have a song thrush that regularly nests in a large spreading bush of *Senecio laxifolius*. The nests are usually

within 2ft of the ground , and I have twice found a common frog in the old nests. I do not have the exact dates, but they were in the late autumn of 1978 and 1980.

The frog sat quite still while the branches were being pulled back. The nest was damp. There appeared to be no easy way for the frog to have got up there., and I was unable to account for it. We did have a number of frogs hibernating in various parts of the garden, but these old nests hardly seem suitable - CHRIS HODGSON, 5 Monkton Road, Minster, Thanet, Kent.

The Australian Museum web site (https://australianmuseum.net.au/blogpost/science/frogs-in-nests) on March 22nd 2012 commented that it was discovered that the Limborg Frog *(Limnonectes limborgi*) of the forest floor Cambodia and Vietnam actually builds itself a nest to deposit it`s spawn. Very few eggs are laid by this frog compared to other species and it is the male frog which guards the eggs. The nest is made in the mud of the forest floor.

Frogs in Birds` Nests

South Wales Echo November 4th 1897

" A correspondent relates a curious thing in this month`s Nature Notes . "We have" , says E.A.M. of Marlborough " made a curious discovery in our garden. Some frogs have taken up their abode for the last month in two deserted blackbirds nests, built in round thick box bushes about two feet from the ground. One frog is generally to be seen alone, sometimes on or near the edge of the nest,

sometimes comfortably ensconced in the middle, only his head peeping out . In the other nest there are always two frogs." The correspondent asks for what reason the frogs are supposed to go to these nests.

Frogs eating Sparrows

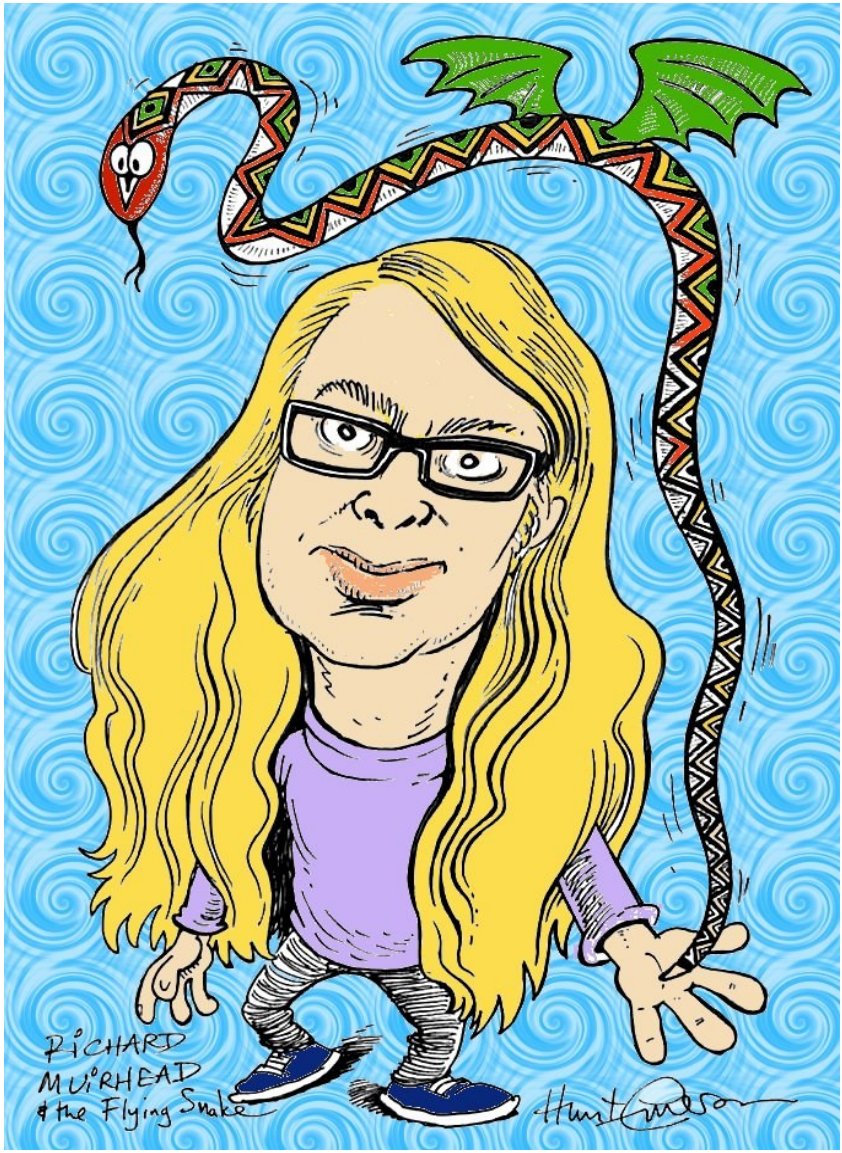
Birds come to untimely end in lily pond

The following very strange story appeared in the Reading Eagle (Pennsylvania) of July 1st 1926 :

Frogs in the lily pond at City Park are feeding on English Sparrows (the blighters! - Dr Devo) The authority on this is a man who visits Penn`s Common daily and spends much time on a bench overlooking the little lake.

The sparrows, hundreds of which nest in the fine trees in the park use the lily pond as a place to drink and bathe, this man told a reporter for the Eagle. I find considerable amusement in watching them alight on the bank, peck at the water with their bills, and in some instances plunge in, beating their wings until a spray rises. Emerging they shake the water from their feathers and hop around on a sunny lawn until they are dry. Several days ago sparrows were bathing. Suddenly there was a great commotion, shrill cries and a wild beating of wings. I saw a huge bull frog leap from the pond just missing one of the sparrows. A half hour later the commotion was repeated. This time, however the frogs aim was true. He nabbed his sparrow and carried the bird with him under the surface, apparently for a feast. Since then I have seen this repeated a couple of times.

Portrait of your Editor by Fortean Times cartoonist Hunt Emerson created at Weird Weekend North April 2017



Chupacabras:

A modern myth

Javier Resines

Chupacabras represent a difficult phenomenon, halfway between cryptozoology, ufology, conspiracy theory and urban legend. A being that we can approach from very different points of view. A new animal, an extraterrestrial, a myth transferred to the 21st century with its modern features? These are some of the hypotheses that are shuffled about seeking to give an explanation to the origin of this strange being.

But contrary to what might be believed, chupacabras are not a modern phenomenon, as we will be able to verify. For centuries, especially in the countries of Latin America (although not only in these countries) we know interesting precedents of its existence. Mayan, Inca and Aztec chronicles and legends have been discovered, among other cultures, in which are told the behaviour of this strange animal in pre-Columbian times.

Some hypotheses about chupacabras: Of all the mysteries that cryptozoology studies, possibly this is one of the most difficult to explain. To understand this, we use both data extracted from the testimonies of the witnesses, historical chronicles and information from the mythological plain, folklore or popular culture, amongst others.

There are many and varied hypotheses about their nature: they come from a parallel universe, they are a laboratory spawn created by man or, perhaps, by alien visitors. But the most commonly accepted expla-

nations can basically be reduced to two. The first of these, fantastic as it may seem, is the one that leads us to think of the existence of one (or several) animal species, unknown to official science, as the protagonist of these animal attacks.

The possibility that something like this is on our planet, although exciting for cryptozoologists, is still remote, let's face it. An animal so common (on the basis of its almost daily occurrences), with such an extensive habitat (the whole American continent, much of Europe and other parts of our globe) and acting among us for so long, would undoubtedly have been hunted, catalogued and possibly exhibited in a zoo.

The most likely explanation for this phenomenon, although less well endowed with mystery, is that we are faced with the presence of a new modern myth. Or rather, modernized and adorned with the attributes of the technological world that we have lived in, but with deep roots in the annals of history, living with man almost since the dawn of time, adapting to the circumstances and changing their name , as we shall see.

Looking for the rational in the fantastic ...

As we have already pointed out, American cosmology is plagued by blood-drinking mythological beings, authentic predecessors of the present chupacabras, from which it seems to take on diverse elements. The origins of these supernatural entities date back to the beginning of the indigenous beliefs that populated the continent in prehistoric times.

The first reference I have found in the literature about the existence of a being with characteristics similar to our modern chupacabras has led me to Mayan mythology, in which appears the **Cax-vinic**, a species of wild man,

a man that allegedly lived in the Sierra Madre, in the Mexican state of Chiapas. This grotesque being is described as being completely covered with hair - usually black or brown - with bright and enraged eyes, nocturnal habits and with a special liking for flesh and blood, especially human.

Without leaving Mexico, a country very inclined to give birth to blood - drinking creatures, we find a particularly strange one, **Corúa.** It has long legs and has the ability to fly thanks to two small wings inserted in its back. Hairy and dark in colour, it attacks animals and men, dismembering their bodies and taking their vital fluids. Certainly terrible.

Rivalling in strangeness with the Corua, we find another similar being, which the Mexican natives of the fields of northern Sonora call **Corbuncho.** It differs from it, fundamentally, in that it lacks wings and has two long arms with large nails and a large jaw with giant tusks, with which it catches and devours its victims.

Also in Mexico, we have another example of a being that seems to come expressly from the Averno itself to terrify us and - incidentally - to take a sip of our blood. It is the so-called **lion-bird,** a beast that frightened the inhabitants of the Sabanagrande region until very recently. According to tradition, this creature is described as a bird of great dimensions and huge beak that devoured or maddened those who had the misfortune to cross its path.

And to finish with the catalogue of devouring beings of the Aztec country, we have **Kakasbal,** a nocturnal and flying animal that feeds on other animals. A hairy monster, with horns and big ears, countless arms and feet and raven claws. Among his powers are - poisoning plants, ruining crops and causing pestilence and famine. He attacks men with his powerful fangs and poisons children to suck their blood. A complete disaster ...

And let us not forget **Uay cen**, the spirit of a sorcerer who takes the form of a small feline and who enters houses at night to extract the blood of those who sleep.

The truth is that, as we can see, all kinds of threatening beings have been disturbing the life of the natives of the region since time immemorial .... even to the present day, with the incorporation of chupacabras into this plethora of blood-drinking monsters.

Not only in Mexico …

But not only in Mexico do we find precedents of the chupacabra phenomenon. We can also trace its presence in other countries of the American continent, such as in neighbouring Honduras. There we find **Timbo**. Its history - more modern than the previous ones - dates back to the early twentieth century, appearing as an annoying visitor which wandered through the cemeteries of the Texiguat region. In this case we have before us a scavenger creature, a creature of graves which feeds on corpses, also known in the area as *sacamuertos* or *comtempores.*

According to witnesses, its appearance is similar to a dog with a pronounced muzzle, which walks on two legs, possessing a bulging belly and covered with reddish fur. To this disturbing description are added extremely long arms and huge claws that would serve to root out and dig graves. Creepy.

In Honduras, in Nicaragua and even in Brazil, another stranger about which we have terrible news, the **Comelenguas.** From ancient times, but especially in the 50's of last century, a mysterious creature caused dread among the population of the south of the Honduran country.

Several peasants observed a gigantic bird flying over the haciendas, attacking cattle with its thick tail. According to these same witnesses, the day after the sightings some dead cattle were found in strange circumstances. The animals appeared dead, with the tongue cut off with roots and jaws dislocated, which reminds us significantly how chupacabras act in many of the modern cases of attacks on cattle attributed to its action.

Nor is the Caribbean free from the dubious fate of having precedents of our particular friend. In the modern cradle of the Chupacabras, on the island of Puerto Rico, we find a curious antecedent of almost impossible form. It is the **Cangodrilo,** a mixture of kangaroo and crocodile, with a description identical to that sometimes given to chupacabras. This Cangodrilo has a more or less humanoid appearance, about five feet tall, skin completely covered with dark hair and hypnotic bright eyes. He is a creature of the night, who utters fearsome cries when he goes out to hunt and to provide food , among his victims are some humans.

It is in Puerto Rico that we find the most recent predecessor of the chupacabras, the **Moca Vampire.** The first appearance of this mysterious creature occurred during the UFO wave on the island in February 1975, some twenty years before chupacabras reached international fame. Both at the time of the unidentified sightings and after the sightings, large amounts of cattle and small animals were found dead and completely bled dry presenting only small perforation wounds. There were no signs of struggle. Does it sound like anything to you?

Bloodsuckers reach America by jumping the channel

There are many more examples of strange beings related to blood practices, such as the **mosquito-man** who in the forests of South

America sucks blood from people with his long nose; or of the **Lampalehua,** a serpent (aquatic or terrestrial, according to which version) very rooted in the beliefs of Mapuche Indians, about six meters long, of great volume and that has the ability to suck the blood of its unfortunate victims.

As I have pointed out, testimonies have also been collected of encounters with similar beings in Brazilian territory, specifically in the state of Goias. The cases occurred in the 1940s and presented similar characteristics to those that took place in Honduras, supposedly carried out by the dreaded Comelenguas.

A modern urban legend?

With chupacabras it seems that we are faced with a cultural phenomenon that repeats itself periodically, with peculiarities typical of each region but which - in essence - has permanent characteristics: mystery, nightlife, legendary character, blood, death, relationship with the dark and the demonic ... All this takes place in an eminently American, Latin and rural environment, although not exclusively.

Chupacabras would be a modern myth related to the symbolism of blood, even relating to the contemporary myth of the vampire. A kind of urban legend, in short, intertwined with the ancestral fear of everything that seems to come from beyond.

This new myth began in Puerto Rico in December 1994, when the first attacks on animals by an unknown person began. From the island, the animal jumped to the American continent, occurring in Spanish-speaking countries essentially (there are also cases in Brazil), probably because of geographical proximity , above all, cultural and idiomatic.

With the rapid spread of the *chupacabras phenomenon,* the most sensationalist media have played a fundamental role. Following the 1996 broadcast of a famous television program in Miami seen throughout Hispanic America (the famous *talk show* Cristina, Univision), encounters with the strange being soared and descriptions (very different to date) began to agree with what was stated in the said programme. Chance? I don `t believe so.

So ? What do we face?

The physical description of the being does not give us any indication of its nature because it has been manipulated by commercial interests, intense journalistic protagonism, among other reasons. Their misdeeds, their sanguinary acts because of the supposed evidence found does not withstand a moderately serious scientific analysis. The corpses are almost never really bloodless, their modus operandi is not so surgical and there is usually nothing mysterious about the deaths of the animals found. Very few of the cases studied actually respond to what is supposed to be a chupacabras type attack. But that does not sell, of course ...

The truth is that, despite attempts to find a paranormal aspect of this phenomenon, I incline towards a vision of the chupacabras being closest to the modern version of some ancient myths related to the dark, the demonic, with blood. All of this is renewed, put into the blender and adapted to the new age of the Internet.

Human beings continue to need and cultivate the myth, sometimes because of the need to have models to hold on to, others continue a tradition that distinguishes itself from the rest and often to explain phenomena that he does not understand. We still need to believe.

In short, chupacabras are a myth that - from time to time - reinvents itself and continues to be topical. An icon product of mass culture, almost a modern urban legend.

Many readers will be asking themselves a question right now. Can each and every case of attacks on livestock be explained so easily? The answer is: no. In my opinion, we must take into account two other ways to help us understand the origin of these events:

On the one hand, in addition to the action of savage predators, man's hand can be seen behind the onslaught of cattle attacks: hoaxers, black magic rituals, quarrels among neighbours, and other similar explanations compete in the dubious honour of being the cause of such outrages.

The second possibility is, in my opinion, the most exciting. It discards the existence of chupacabras as a new species for cataloguing, but offers the possibility of an animal that officially disappeared millennia ago and that could hide behind some of the attacks produced, fundamentally, in America. I refer to the possibility put forward by some investigators that megalonyx, a species of giant sloth which disappeared in the Pleistocene, could continue to live among us, making itself present through the consequences of its attacks.

Fantastic, right? But this matter will be developed in another report ....

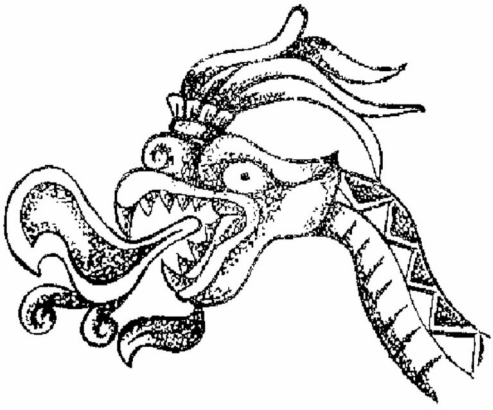
Images of chupacabras

From Javier Resines

Fig 1.

Chupacabras, an artist`s impression by Rober Garay.

Fig 2.



Recreation of the Kakasbal

Fig 3

Artistic recreation of the Comelenguas

Fig 4

EL VOCERO DE PUERTO RICO

VOL. 1 NUM. 283 - SAN JUAN, P.R. - JUEVES 27 DE MARZO DE 1975 15¢

1— 7982—$100,000
2—17869—$ 36,000
3—32338—$ 16,000
4—39499—$ 10,000
(Vea lista oficial en la página 16)

"VAMPIRO" ATACA OBRERO EN MOCA

Página 3

A cazar el pájaro "Vampiro"

Vecinos del barrio Pueblo, de Moca, fuertemente armados salían nuevamente anoche a recorrer el área al saber que Juan Muñiz Feliciano alegó haber sido atacado por un extraño pájaro a eso de las 10 de la noche. Muñiz Feliciano describió al "ser asqueroso" como de unas 50 libras, con muchas plumas. El hombre dijo que es obrero de la construcción. (Foto EL VOCERO por Benjamín Cordero). OTRA FOTO E INFORMACION EN PAGINA 3.

En barrio de Moca

"Vampiro" ataca hombre

Estudian oferta de PR Cement

"El Vampiro" blanco

Desaforan abogado un año

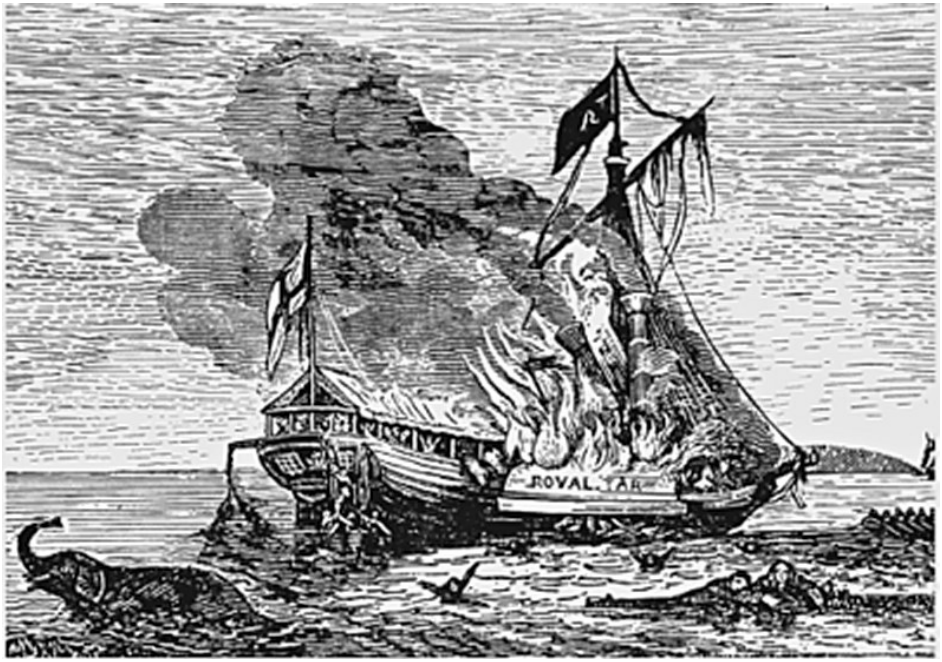
Fig 5 One of the most well known images of the chupacabra.

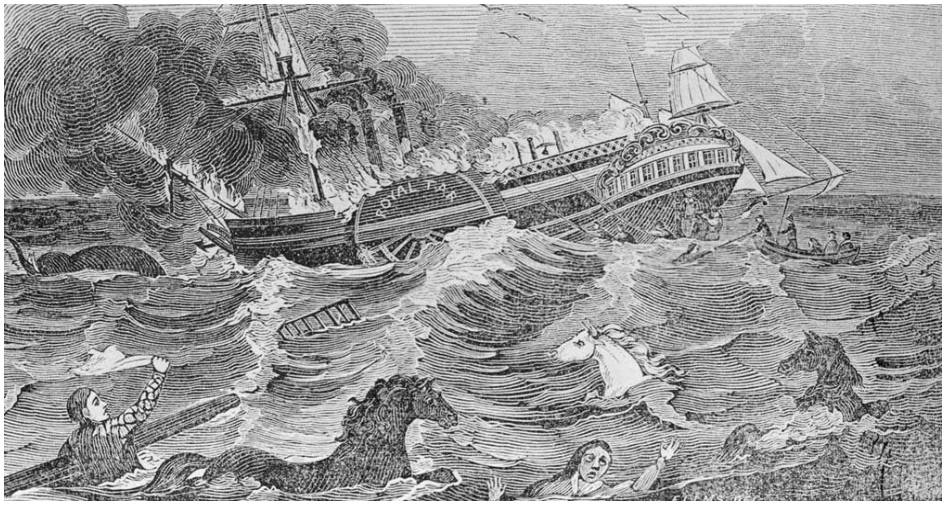
Fig 6 Chupacabra represented by a species of giant kangaroo.

Fig 7

Megalonyx, one explanation of cases of attacks on cattle in America.

Elephants Found at Sea or Washed Ashore Part 1 Bob Skinner





Sheilds Daily Gazette 16th Sept 1879 p. 3 & Edinburgh Evening News 15th Sept 1879

A STRANDED ELEPHANT.

A most extraordinary find has been made at Stokes Bay, near Portsmouth, where, on the tide receding, a huge object was seen to have been left on the beach. It was at first thought to be a whale, but closer inspection proved it to be a good-sized elephant. How the animal got into the water, or whether and what distance the carcase had floated, is a mystery. Many curious sight-seers visited the spot, and on Saturday afternoon one of the Government tugs towed the dead elephant into the sea, and then cast it adrift.

Below : Derby Daily Telegraph 26th September 1887 page 2.

AN ELEPHANT WASHED ASHORE.

A remarkable piece of flotsam has been washed ashore on Leasowe Embankment, on the Cheshire side of the Mersey. This is the carcase of an elephant, which has evidently been in the water for a long time. The skin is quite denuded of hair, and the carcase is in an advanced state of putrefaction. How it came where it is is a mystery, but it is presumed to have died while on a voyage, when the carcase was thrown overboard.

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette Page 3
17 March 1934

Is it an elephant's skull? If not, what? It was found on Hendon beach yesterday and weighs 10lb.

ELEPHANT MYSTERY OF THE SEA

Aberdeen Journal

August 14th 1944 p. 4.

CREWS of two Peterhead seine-net fishing boats report having come upon the carcase of an elephant floating in the sea off the Buchan coast.

They had to steer a cautious course to avoid it.

How the carcase came to be in the North Sea is a mystery.

BURIAL OF AN ELEPHANT IN THE COUNTY CORK.

An extraordinary bill has just been paid by the Castletownbere Rural District Council, county Cork—viz., 20s, the cost of burying the carcase of an elephant cast ashore on the county Cork, within the Castletown bere rural district. At the last meeting of the Rural District Council the bill, in the following terms, was presented for payment:—"To burying the carcase of a supposed elephant, which measured over twenty feet in length, and was washed ashore close to Ballycrovane Coastguard Station, £1." Denis Kelly, sanitary sub-officer informed the Council that the strange carcase was that of an elephant, and was very large and greatly decomposed. It took four men to bury it, and the expenses incurred in so doing was 20s. The Council decided to pay the amount of the bill.

Londonderry Sentinel March 7th 1905 p. 6

Lancashire Evening Post - 21 September 1907 Page 2

ELEPHANT'S SKULL DREDGED UP

As the trawler Alice was taking up nets near the North-West Lightship, yesterday, it was found that in one of them was a large skull, weighing about 60lb. It was ultimately identified as being that of an elephant, and a large specimen at that.

Dead Elephant Netted

Reading Eagle (PA) March 20th 1960

Grimsby, England, March 19 (AP)—A British trawler caught an elephant today. The huge beast, stone dead, came up in the nets of the trawler Ampulla off Flamborough head on England's Northeast coast. It was so heavy it burst the trawl and floated away on the tide. Skipper Fred Ireland said he had no idea how the elephant got in the sea.

Trawler's surprise catch

A skull more than five feet in length, with vertebrae in proportion, was picked up in the trawl of the trawler Venture in the North Sea, and taken to Grimsby.

The crew concluded it must be the skull of an elephant. The trawler owners have approached the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to see if it can be identified.

Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail - 14 January 1922 Page 4

AN ELEPHANT'S CARCASE?

Strange Object on Seaton Sands.

Rumours grew as one neared the beach—elephants, camels, etc., down to a poor Jacko—had been washed ashore, until one expected to see a whole menagerie lying on the beach. Near Carr House a dark mass, decomposed skin, embedded in which was a huge vertebrae, the whole half covered with sand, was pointed out as the elephant, and as one young lady said, it was indeed "some" elephant. Another animal, it was said, had been washed ashore opposite the Snook.

Western Morning News 22nd October 1929 p.8 and Western Daily Press 22nd October 1929 p. 6

ELEPHANT WASHED ASHORE

The carcase of a fully-developed elephant was washed up on the beach at Aberavon yesterday.

When it was observed rolling in the heavy seas people became alarmed that it was a whale. It is in a decomposed state, and part of its head is missing.

Notes & Queries ?

Charles Fort
Wikipedia
Commons

Giant hail in China in 1866

The Naturalists Note Book 1867

Hailstones in China - On Tuesday at 6 p.m. on June 5th 1866, a thunder storm came from the north-east, and broke over Peking with great violence. The hailstones soon followed the first dash of rain, and increased in size and quantity till the rain almost seemed to cease. The shower lasted 40 minutes , leaving the yards white with hailstones, but as the wind was light no damage was done. The very largest stones were 4 to 4 1/2 inches in circumference ; the prevailing shape was conical, and almost all the stones exhibited a kernel of clear ice enclosed in frozen snow, with a covering of ice outside. The strata of air through which they passed in their descent must have been of very different degrees of temperature to produce such distinct layers of ice and snow in the stones. Such hailstorms are not frequent in the North of China, and the people say that this one is the most remarkable since July, 1838, when the stones were like oranges and apples and melons for size, and did great damage to dwellings and trees - W.Williams in the *American Journal of Science and Art,* March 1867.

FLYING SNAKE.

Has a Skull Like an Adder and a Bat-Like Expression.

New York Journal.

A flying snake five feet long has built its nest in one of the tall trees at Waterford, N. J., and when it is not setting on its eggs to hatch out a lot more flying snakes it is roving about intimidating the natives.

No amount of hunting in mere natural history books will reward the searcher with a glimpse of a picture of a flying snake or any information about one. The creature does not exist in any scientific work. It is found only in Waterford, where a party of indignant citizens are making a desperate effort to locate it before it eats some of the farmers.

Robert McDougall, who saw the flying snake, is perhaps the most prominent citizen of Waterford—a fact that the intelligent reader has already guessed, for persons who see sea serpents, flying snakes, wild men or horned gazoozas are invariably described by their neighbors as prominent in order that the story may not be doubted and the town thereby indirectly reflected upon.

This gentleman was taking a short trip through the woods, cogitating as he walked as to the turnip crop, when suddenly the flying snake darted from the low branch of a bruned pine tree and flapped its wings with hoarse cries until it vanished from view. Its bearing was plainly vindictive.

"It had the look of a bat in its face," says McDougall, "but it was a flying snake sure enough; one of the venomous kind, I should say. Its skull resembled that of a puff adder, but it had no hair, and it had a tapering tail and eyes that flashed fire. I have seen all sorts of things in my time, but never before did I set eyes on a monster like that," and Mr. McDougall shuddered at his narrow escape.

On the following morning the Waterford vigilantes armed themselves and repaired to the lair of the flying snake. They found its footprints, not in the air, where it might be expected that a snake on the fly would leave them, but on the ground. They were web-like prints, something like those of a swan. The local indignation increased when it was thereby proved that the monster is amphibious.

Hiram Beechwood, who lives at a place called Elm, says he saw the flying snake at daybreak crossing a road near a swamp. As soon as it noticed it was observed it exchanged looks of deadly hate with him and then, uttering an angry bleat like an exasperated sheep, unwound a pair of bat-like wings and slowly flew into the swamp, where it is feared it has a nestful of eggs.

According to the ornithologists of the place, flying snakes are an established fact. They stick pretty closely to the thick undergrowth unless driven out by forest fires or lack of food. They build in tall trees, Mr. McDougall says, and when in a good temper utter a note something like that of a robin who has just found a worm. When annoyed or frightened, however, they emit an angry scream that is very terrifying.

Another search that is being made up to visit the Big Swamp to secure the flying snake, and the citizens are arming themselves. Mr. McDougall has offered a reward of $5 for its scalp, dead or alive, and everyone has quit work to go flying snake hunting.

Some of the residents hold that the snake is a vegetarian and won't eat Jerseymen. Others wisely say that this may be so, but still it might bite them, and they are going after it, to put it out of its misery.

Skeleton of a fox found in a tree

The Stanstead Journal (U.S.A.) November 13th 1913

FOX SKELETON IN TREE FORK

Some Pennsylvania Naturalists Guess It Leaped There to Get Fowl and Missed.

Pittsburgh.—Local naturalists are guessing how the skeleton of a fox got in the forks of a tree on the Clarion river, near Cooksburg. The skeleton was discovered by Charles Garland, a member of the Edgewood troop, Boy Scouts, in the course of a nature study ramble with his comrades.

The Scouts, during the weeks spent in the woods and fields, took every opportunity to study the ways of birds and animals, the characteristics of tree and plant life. They found bones of animals occasionally which they classified, but the fox skeleton was the prize naturalistic discovery of the amateur research party. The skeleton was that of a fox full grown and perfectly formed.

Foxes, as the Scout naturalists had often read, burrow holes in the ground for their homes. Rarely are they known to leap into a tree except perhaps as a last resort when hunted by dogs. As the boys sat around the campfire evenings they spun theories as to the possible fate of reynard. A few thought the fox had jumped into the tree to elude pursuers, had become caught in the forks of the tree and had starved to death. Others surmised the animal, sick or wounded, had climbed the tree and had chosen the tree forks as its deathbed.

Still others advanced the explanation that the sly and crafty terror of barnyards had jumped into the tree to catch a stray fowl alighting on its branches and had slipped into the forks, which proved a trap from which there was no escape.

Oddly Coloured Squirrels

Some oddly coloured squirrels are said to have been taken near Belleville,Ontario.A black squirrel with numerous white spots was killed by Hull Austin, and another man got a fox coloured black squirrel. The queerest two were black squirrels, one with a red tail and the other with a big white spot on the breast and one on the back.

A cream coloured black squirrel and a “snow white” one , both rufous brown on the underparts, were killed. Such groups of odd animals are often noted in certain neighbourhoods. In some places freak robins will be seen every year; in another it is oddly coloured quail.

Strange Crocodile or a prehistoric survivor off India in 1815?

I found the following strange account of a crocodile killed off Calcut -ta in the National Gazette (Philadelphia) of September 28th 1826, part of a much larger extract from the *Revue Encyclopaedique* (`On the Dragons and Monstrous Serpents which are introduced in a great number of Fabulous or Historical Narratives.`)

In the year 1815, a crocodile was killed near Calcutta, seventeen or eighteen feet in length, armed with enormous claws. Where the head joined the body was a swelling, whence sprang four bony projections; on the back were three rows of similar projections ; and four towards the tail, the end of which formed a sort of saw, being the termination of the rows of projections. These swellings, these bony projections rightly appear in the pictures of the celebrated Tarasque of Tarascon, and of a number of dragons and serpents belonging to various legends.

Caterpillar invasion in Yorkshire

Yorkshire Post 5/8/1972

Caterpillar invasion

PEOPLE LIVING in Harrogate Road, Greengates, Bradford, are being invaded by an army of caterpillars. They fall from the branches of a beech tree which overhangs the garden of Mrs. Kathleen Wilson's Corporation house.

"They crawl up the garden path and the walls of the house. I have swilled hundreds down the sink outside, but they still keep coming," said Mr. Wilson.

A neighbour, Mr. Frank Smith, is afraid that the caterpillars, which cluster round his doorway, will eventually get into his house. He and Mrs. Wilson has complained to the Corporation, who own the tree.

A spokesman for the city's housing department said the matter would be dealt with as soon as possible.

Yorkshire Post August 5th 1972

“Donkey tiger” or hyena in India

Country Life April 21st 1900

A Donkey Tiger. (To the editor) Sir ,- Herewith I enclose a photo-graph of a hyena which was shot by me a few days ago, and may be of interest to some of your readers. These animals , though not un-

common, are very seldom seen on account of their nocturnal habits. In Tamil they are called “donkey tigers.” Dr Devo says : Although there is no cryptozoological significance to this story, I am interested in the ethnozoological implications of the phrase “ donkey tiger” be-cause to my mind, this animal looks nothing like a donkey or a tiger, apart from the obvious fact that it is a stripped hyena which was and is a native of India and elsewhere. I wonder if actually the Donkey Tiger was something else entirely?

A Coypu in Gloucestershire in 1945?

The following story of a coypu thousands of miles from its usual home in South America, appeared in a letter to Country Life on August 10th 1945 shortly before the end of World War Two, on September 2nd 1945.

A Strange Beast in Gloucestershire

Sir - A few weeks ago, my wife and I were driving home through South Gloucestershire shortly after midnight, when we overtook an animal of unusual appearance travelling along the edge of the road. It remained on the road and in the beam of our headlamps until we drew level with it, when it disappeared into the hedge.

It was of a dark reddish brown colour, not unlike the colour of a fox. but rather darker. Its coat was coarse. In conformation it appeared to be rather like a badger with large ungainly hindquarters and short legs. Its gait was clumsy—more of a waddle than a trot. Unfortunately we could not see its head.

Local enquiries had failed to throw light on this strange creature, and we were beginning to favour the view that it was a badger of unusual colour, when we were told by a lady that she had seen just such an animal break cover during a pheasant drive in Hertfordshire three years ago. She had been told at the time that several of them had escaped from a zoo, and that they were on the increase. Can any of your readers supply more information about it? GERALD BEADLE *, Boodle`s, St James`s Street, S.W. 1.*

[Our correspondent`s description is rather vague, but we hazard a guess that the unknown animal may have been a coypu or nutria. This large marsh-loving rodent from South America was formerly imported and kept for fur-breeding purposes when some escaped and “strange beasts” turned up here and there. It is a bulky creature, with sloping hind-quarters, and its fur, when dry, is rough and brown. But we must add that we have not heard of any at large for a considerable time - ED.]

A tiny horse in China

New York Tribune

January 27th 1888

Full-grown ,gracefully formed, four years old, and only thirty- five inches high.

Under an oyster-counter in the restaurant of Henry F. Mubs , no 186 Monroe-Street, a little Chinese immigrant, against whose importation Denis Kearney would have raised no objections, has taken up his quarters. It is a horse, and it is composed of less horse-flesh than any other members of the equine family in the United States. Withal it does not appear to be the resulted of stunted growth, for its seventy eight pounds of weight are distributed so perfectly that the tiny animal appears as graceful as a gazelle. Its nose is as slender as that of a grey hound, and its dainty legs are no thicker below the hock than a man`s thumb. The little beast stands but thirty-five inches from the floor, and Mr Mubs, who is a jolly rotund man of about the average height, takes great delight in spreading his legs and allowing the little stranger to run under the archway thus formed. The curious animal is the property of Officer Benjamin of the Madison Street Police Station, and was presented to its proud possessor by Captain James McGowan, of the clipper Ariel, which arrived this week from China. The little horse has attained its full size, being a four-year old stallion. It was dubbed "Baby Bunting" at once by Mr. Benjamin, and has already learned its name.

A Gorilla in Nineteenth Century California

San Francisco Bulletin April 11th 1891

Woodland is in excitement over a report that a strange creature ,"much resembling a gorilla" has been seen in the hills adjacent to Capay Valley. The story is vouched for by more than one responsible man. It is said to be at least six feet tall when standing erect, travels on all fours, climbs trees, and has wonderful strength in its hands. It has a shaggy covering.

New species of British snake?

This story appeared in the U.K. media on August 7th 2017. Here is an extract from the B.B.C. `s online report:

New grass snake identified in the U.K.

A new type of snake has been identified in the UK, bringing the total number of species to four.

Scientists say the barred grass snake, *Natrix helvetica*, is actually a different species to the common or eastern grass snake, *Natrix natrix*.

Before, it was thought the grass snake was one species with several subspecies that looked slightly different. Both types of grass snake

are normally found in lowland regions in the south of England. The snakes can be more than a metre (3ft) long, are found near water and eat mainly amphibians like frogs and newts.

The newly distinguished barred grass snake is grey, not olive green like the *N. natrix* and does not have the same bright yellow collar. The snake is also found in Switzerland, Italy and France and also has been seen in western Germany." (See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40853286)

Wonderful Monster

Salem Gazette (Massachusetts) April 29th 1825

The `Almanach de Paris` gives the following story as having been published in the town of Agen, with the approbation of the Prefect, to make known the appearance of a new monster, designated the *cesteo-tigre-marin,* a marine compound of the stag, the lion and the tiger: -

A monster of a new species has made its appearance at Conquet , in the department of Finisterre , on the night of 18th Sept. According to our account , this animal, which is unique for its strength, its make, its agility and its ferocity, was heard to issue from the sea with terrible cries. Men, women and children, all armed with hatchets, guns and forks, hastened at day-break to discover the intruder; they perceived at some distance an enormous animal, holding a bull between its paws, which he was in the act of devouring. On seeing his assailants, he quitted his prey,and, with loud cries,ran about, wounding every one who opposed him, in spite of the discharges of fire-arms, and directed his course to the neighbouring villages. The tocsin (alarm bell or signal - Dr Devo.)was rung, the monster

fled at the noise of the musketry, and, escaping beneath the walls, took refuge in a wood. The garrison of Conquet flew to arms, and the cannoneers took their station on the rampart with their pieces; but balls were found ineffectual. The monster was at length attacked, while endeavouring to escape from the wood, by cannon, when this incomparable creature was destined to breathe his last, after terrible howlings and violent struggles, and after biting his pursuers in the excess of rage.

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Monster "hen" in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Observer December 6th 1931

It is reported from the village of Podvelezh, in Herzegovina, that peasants drawing water were alarmed to hear a heavy flapping inside the well, and looking down, saw a strange animal. They immediately rushed for their rifles and riddled it with shots. One of the bravest then allowed himself to be let down by ropes, and brought back the creature, which is described as resembling a hen, but ten to fifteen times larger; its left side is covered with thick reddish brown fur, while the head and left side are black. It has been handed in to the hospital at Mostar for identification.

(Sadly I expect this hospital was destroyed either during World War 2 or in the civil wars which tore the former Yugoslavia apart during the 1990s, hence the original records of this monster "hen" may well be lost.)

A stone turtle which is near the temple of Erdeni -Tsu in Mongolia.
From the book ` Mongolia - Unknown Land` by Joergen Bisch

Fish with legs in Kansas

Maybe Nature Has Equipped Piscatorial Flood Sufferers

Emporia Gazette (Kansas) June 19th 1908

Fairbury, Nebraska, June 19 A great many guesses have been made by residents of Fairbury as to the name of a couple of animals, or fish, which ever they may be, brought in by Gus Bitzer , a Rock Island engineer, when he returned on his run from Belleville, Kansas. In appearance the things resemble catfish, being of the same color and shape, but they have four legs each , and each leg has (?) with five toes.

Immediately back of the head three growths appear on each of the animals. The strangers seem to get around every bit as well on dry land as they do in water. They have been on exhibition in the window of a local drug store and hundreds of persons have seen them , but no one has been found who ever had seen anything like them before. Bitzer caught them in a pool of water near Belleville yesterday. He says there are many specimens in the Belleville neighbourhood, but nobody there seems to know what they are. The animals appear to be vicious and snap at anything held near them. Dr G.L. Pritchett is of the opinion that the animals are small specimens of the salamander family.

Tame dragon

Ulrich Magin sent me this by e-mail on February 17th 2017:

In the "King`s Mirror", a Norwegian book of the 13th century which lists all knowledge of the world (including a synopsis of the Old Testament), there is a reference to the letter which Prester John allegedly had sent from India. The book says about the wonders of that far-off land: "If I may be amazed about something which is described therein, and which to me is not the last of wonders, it is the fact that small people there tame the big flying dragons which dwell in the mountains and ride on them, just as on horses." I have translated this from the German edition "Königsspiegel" (Gustav Kiepenheur: Leipzig 1978, p.47) There will surely be an English translation.

I hope you are fine,

Ulrich.

New Species of spiders found in Far North of Australia

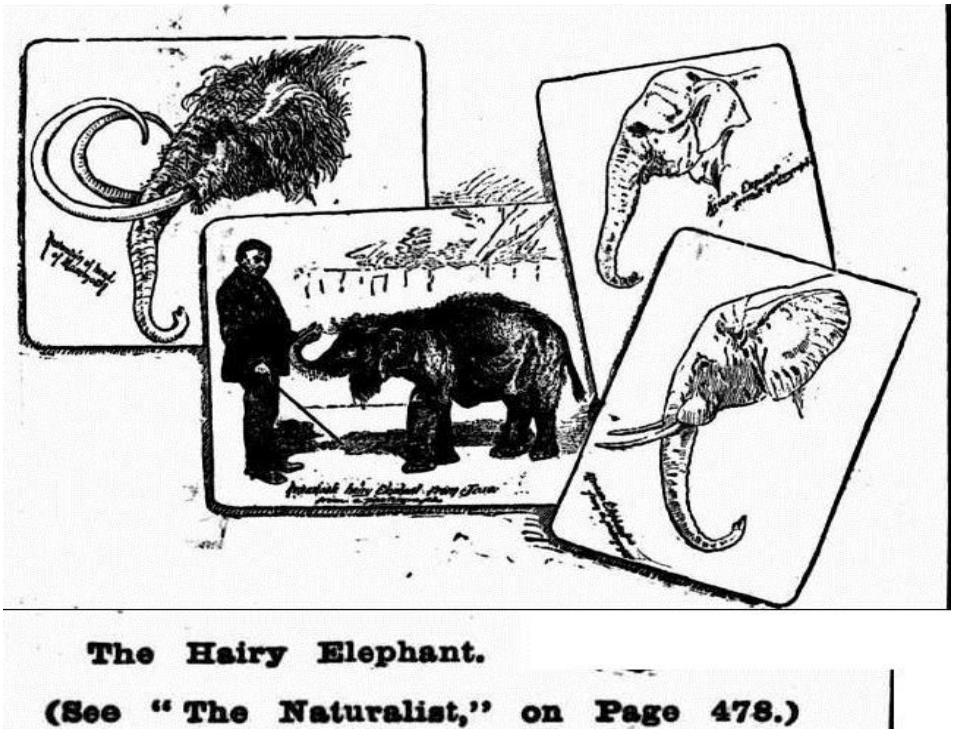
The Guardian April 11th 2017 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/apr/11/fifty-new-species-of-spider-discovered-in-far-north-australia

More than 50 new species of spider , including a peacock spider "with a wonderful courtship behaviour, like dancing, " have been discovered in Queensland Australia`s Cape York region, during a 10-day trip by scientists from the Queensland Museum.

The new arachnids, which are now being formally classified, include a brush-footed trap-door spider, a large black creature that looks like a funnel web with the added power of being able to walk up glass doors; a new species of swift spider, with fuzzy black and white front legs; and several new species of ant spider... Of particular interest to Baehr was a new species of peacock spider, which has "a wonderful courtship behaviour, like dancing," and a new species of jumping spider spider, which also danced."

HAIRY ELEPHANT IN SUMATRA

A hairy elephant



The Hairy Elephant.

(See "The Naturalist," on Page 478.)

Depiction of a hairy elephant found in Sumatra . Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney) March 5th 1887.Via Trove.

Tasmanian tiger in York Peninsula, Australia

Tasmanian Tiger: `Sightings` of extinct animal spark hunt in Australia

www.independent.co.uk March 25th 2017

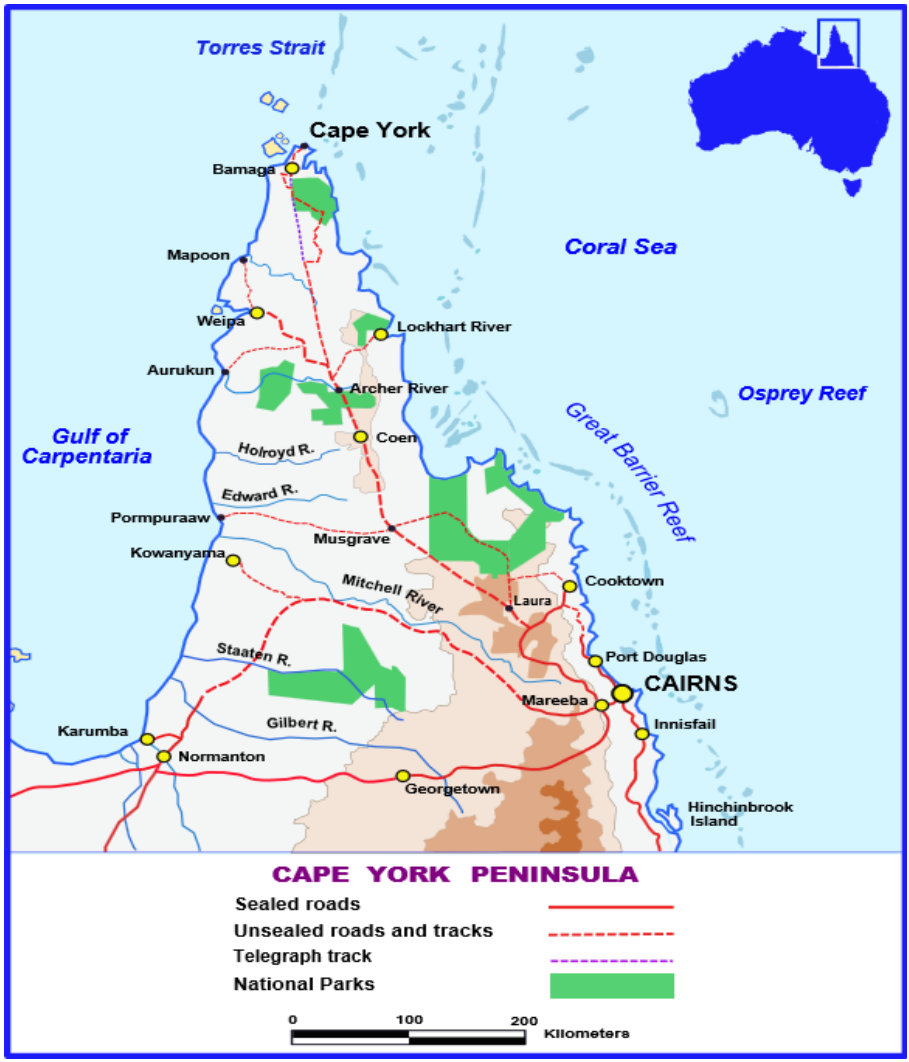
Apparent sightings of the Tasmanian tiger in northern Australia have sparked a search for the long-extinct carnivore. The wolf-like predators were the largest known carnivorous marsupial to have existed alongside human society, but the last known specimen died in a zoo on the island of Tasmania in 1936. However, based on eyewitness evidence provided by a tourism officer and a former park ranger, 50 camera traps will be set up across the Cape York Peninsula in the hope of finding a surviving population.

Professor Bill Laurence will be heading the survey, which will take place across remote locations in Australia`s largest wilderness area...The two latest observations, whose exact location is being kept a secret by the researchers, are considered plausible. Patrick Shears, a qualified ranger, added that aboriginal locals also reported sightings of the beast.

Taxidermied Thylacine. (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) at National Museum of Natural Sciences, Madrid. By Osado. Wikipedia Commons

Cape York Peninsula

Map of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, Australia. Drawn using Inscape. This image supercedes the similar File:Cyp ed 6.svg, by the addition of the 'Telegraph Track' and minor edits.



By "Summerdrought" Wikipedia Commons
7th December 2015

Peculiar Sea Monster

Oregonian (Portland, Oregon) April 10th 1943

VOL. LXXXII— NO. 25,727 Entered at Portland (Oregon) Postoffice as Second-Class Matter.

Sea Monster Baffles Beach Folk

ILWACO, WASH. Remains of a strange sea creature with elongated flippers protruding from the sides near its head and equipped with a 15-foot spine-covered tail remained unidentified on Long Beach peninsula Friday after scores of curious persons examined it. Inset shows head and one flipper. The sketch accompanying the above photograph is a reconstruction of the appearance of the creature as it must have appeared in life. It was 40 feet long and estimated to weigh between 3000 and 4000 pounds.

Freak of Sea Strikes Sands

Ilwaco, April 10th .Examination of the giant sea beast that washed ashore on the Long Beach peninsula this week has revealed physical characteristics, including leg-like attachments, that baffled veteran fishermen of this area. Lieutenant Vernon Saunders of the United States army, who took photographs of the great carcass as it lay on the beach sands, estimated it would, in life, weigh about 4000 pounds. Its overall length , the lieutenant said, was close to 40 feet, of which 15 feet was a definite tail, studded with foot-long spines as large as lead pencils.

The body, he said, was about three feet in diameter, with a beaver-shaped head that seemed far too small for the rest of it. Elongated flippers that might once have been legs extended outwards from just back of the head. The body was covered with hair.

Bones Like Rubber

The bones of the creature ,Lieutenant Saunders declared were not bones at all, but were pliable and of the texture of gristle. The "backbone" he said, was clearly marked, but like the rest of the framework, could be bent with pressure. One fisherman, according to the lieutenant, looked at the giant for a long time, then said, "I`ve fished up and down this coast from Alaska south and I never before saw anything that resembled this.

So impressed with the strange appearance of the monster was the lieutenant that he pencilled a sketch that seemed to him to resemble the animal as it would have appeared in life. The result was a weird combination of whale and the common " water dog. "Its flesh was of salmon texture and color" , he said, and the eye-sockets were large as the standard softball.

+

Fire or spotted salamander in Surrey

Surrey Advertiser August 8th 1908

The Recent Discovery of a Lizard : Mr F.H.Elsley writes :The lizard recently found on the Hog`s Back has been sent to the Educational Museum at Haslemere. It proves to be from Central and Southern Europe, where it is known as the `Spotted Salamander` (salamandia maculosa). It has a bad reputation.

It certainly can emit a poisonous secretion from its skin and there is a superstition in Algeria and Syria that if thrown on a fire it will not be consumed. In its native haunts its vivid black and yellow colours stand it in good stead and it is severely left alone. So far it has refused to eat anything, but Mr E.W. Swanton (curator) hopes it will live. How it came to be found on the Hog`s Back is certainly a mystery.

Below - Fire salamander Salamandra salamandra terrestris

Wikipedia Creative Commons - Museum of Toulouse

Above - Largest snail currently thought to exist. Wikipedia Commons Alexander R.Jenner. April 25th 2010.

Achatina fulica in Ubud, Bali, 2010.

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Snail size of a small dog

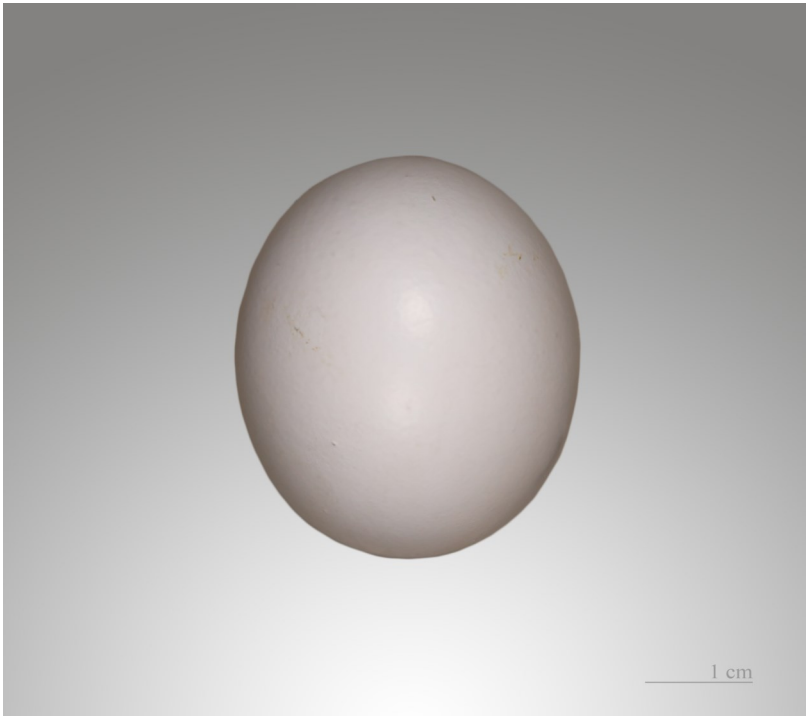
Evening Nonpareil (Council Bluffs, Iowa) August 24th 1908

" A giant snail recently brought from South Africa to England is fully as large as two-fifths of an ordinary man and lays an egg which resembles that of a pigeon in size color and texture." [Now I guessed the height of an "ordinary man" to be say 5ft 10 inches (if I`m an "ordinary man" I`ll eat my hippy woolly hat!) and therefore the length

of this snail would have been about 71cm!! Quite a monster! The largest ever snail was the African giant snail *Achatina achatina* at 39.3 cm in December 1978 according to the Net. The pigeon`s egg is I guess about 2 inches long. So we clearly have a cryptid here. I have never come across ,up until now a snail the size of a small dog. Or was it a newspaper hoax?]

Egg of a common wood pigeon

Collection Jacques Perrin de Brichambaut Lumigny-Nesles-Ormeaux, Seine-et-Marne, France Didier Descounes January 15th 2012. Wikipedia Commons.



If this is life size, then the snail would appear to be about 3 or 4ft long from tip of head to “tail.” From https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/188588303119522565/

Illinois Boys Catch Alligator in Sewer

Trenton Evening Times August 18th 1946

Rockford ,Ill Five hours of dangling down a sewer hole in Rockford`s residential district produced the Summer`s most unusual catch for 10-year-old Eugene Yagle and Edmund Carlgren, eight. They had seen a sharp little black nose poking out from the sewer grates. They got some ham and a piece of line , and after a long afternoon, lured out a foot-long alligator , which was installed as Edmund`s pet, in the Carlgren bathtub.

Turtle saves fisherman from the paws of a bear

Anaconda Standard (Montana) July 12th 1907

Port Jervis N.Y.July 11th—A fisherman hunted by a bear and helped out of a predicament by a stay-at-home snapping turtle is James Williamson of this town. Williamson was eating lunch after a morning`s fishing in Yankee pond this afternoon when the sudden appearance of Bruin so startled him that he fell into the water. He climbed on a log and managed to reach his pole, which was set in the bank. Winding the line many times around the stock of the gun he had brought along, he carefully drew the weapon to him from the shore. He shot the bear and crippled it. Then a remarkable thing happened. The bear, sniffing at the end of the log on which Williamson had sought refuge, was caught

on the snout by a big snapping turtle. Bruin, wild with pain, backed up the bank, and Williamson had a chance to get ashore. He killed the bear and then shot the turtles head off in an effort to release its hold. Even then the severed head held on to the bear`s nose. The turtle proved to be a domestic creature that apparently had not moved 10 feet in 37 years. On its back were the initials "E.W." and the date "1870" .Ellery Weir , one of Williamson`s townsmen, recognized the inscription as one he had cut into a turtle`s shell not 10 feet from where Williamson was fishing 37 years ago.

A Flying Dog

I found this brief item in Wonders of Nature by Glyn Prothero (1946) "Dog with wings, born in italy,1512" Anyone know any more?

King Henry VIII`s Sea Monster

Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 21 Part 1, January - August 1546. Originally published by Her Majesty`s Stationery Office, London, 1908.

"You shall receive herewith "the portraiture of a monster lately taken in such parts of the seas as may appear unto you by the subscription of the same. It was brought me "by a gentleman , one of the strangers soldiers here that came out of Flaunders, who affirmeth it to be true." For its strangeness, I send it you, to use as you think good. Bearer, Mr Norton,…"

The Central American Ape

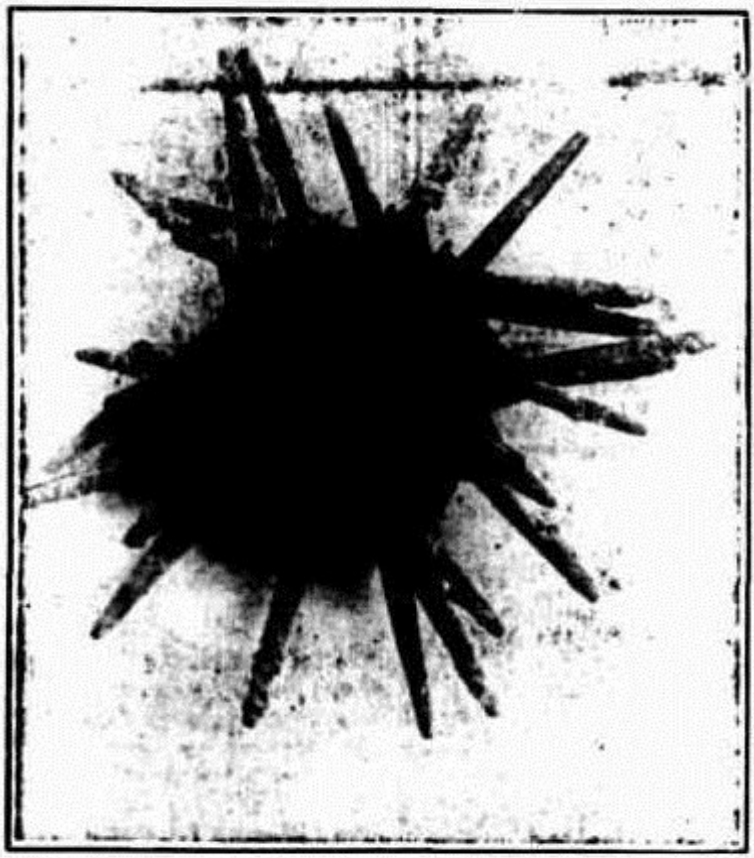
Idaho Falls Times August 30th 1894

On an island off the Mosquito coast, Nicaragua, Central America, there is a species of ape very closely resembling the African gorilla, both in size and in its sunny disposition. How it came there is only a matter of conjecture - for it departs unduly from the characteristics of the American monkey tribe.

Male gorilla in San Francisco Zoo. Wikipedia Creative Commons. By Brocken Inaglory.

[The Mosquito coast is in the North - East corner of Nicaragua. Perhaps these “gorillas” came across the Atlantic from West Africa a long time ago? Dr Devo.]

WHAT IS IT ?



This strange object, which was washed up on the shore near Newcastle, was described by the finder as a seahorse's egg. But as there is no such animal as a seahorse, its origin is a mystery. A wag has suggested that it was found in a mare's nest. No prize is offered for the correct answer to the conundrum.

The Newcastle Sun (NSW) July 24th 1924

A Tiger in Hong Kong in 1991?

This information was posted by a Gurkha soldier in 2017 about his experiences in Hong Kong`s New Territories in 1991, on Siobhan Daiko`s Writing, Romance and Adventure blog.

Eric Martin May 14th 2017: "In 1991 I was in the New Territories of HK serving with the Gurkhas. I sent my staff ahead to the rock climbing area and followed an hour later. I got a bit lost and was walking through high grass, all the time looking for my troops. Suddenly I came across a single track on the path which sent shivers down my spine. It was quite fresh in the damp soil and was huge! I retraced my steps quickly, all the time expecting to meet a tiger leaping out from the elephant grass. I have remembered that encounter all these years and only recently Googled 'Tigers in HK' to see whether there actually are any. The results are similar to mine: occasional sightings of tracks." (1)

1. https://siobhandaiko.wordpress.com/2012/11/06/the-last-tiger-to-be-shot-in-hong-kong-a-truth-stranger-than-fiction/

Incandescent Worm

Specimen Discovered in Dallas which is

much larger than the one found in Abilene.

Dallas Morning August 6th 1902

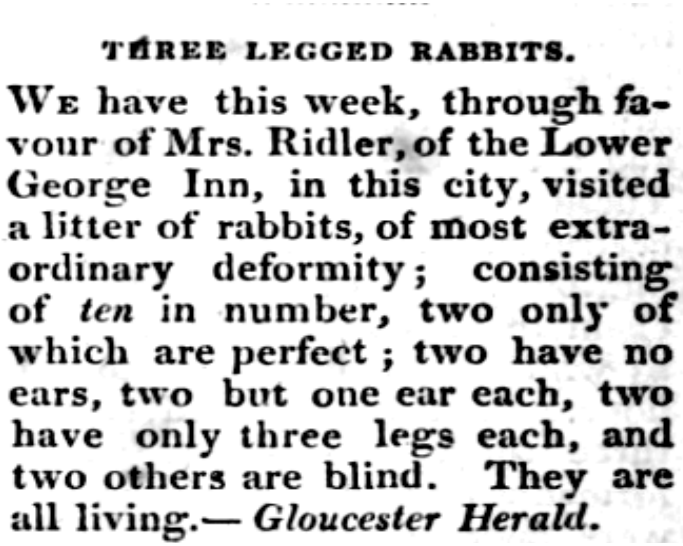
Dallas has all that other cities have, and more. The finding of the peculiar shining worm, at Abilene last week, which was reported in yesterday`s News, was paralleled here about the same time. The captain of engine house No. 3 captured one of the brilliant worms on Gaston avenue, and was so struck by its uniqueness that he kept it alive five days by feeding it leaves, etc. The thing was quite an attraction for the engine house. Unlike the Abilene specimen, the Dallas worm was five inches long instead of one. But it had the nine little lights strung along its body, and a larger one on its head, so that when coiled and seen in the dark it makes the seer`s heart leap. He thinks that he has stumbled on a second " Great Mogul", for the gleam is not fitful like that of a glow worm, but steady and continuous.

Ghost Bicycle in Macclesfield?

This strange but true incident happened to myself, your Editor Dr Devo at about 7 p.m. on July 17th 2017, whilst I was totally sober and not using any recreational drugs, nor was I *not* taking my daily meds for my mental illness. I was walking along a quiet street about 100 yards from a busy road which was at right angles to the road I was walking along. This road was elevated about 25 feet above the one I was on, on top of a bridge going over a subway. I was walking towards this busy road and looking towards it at an angle of about 20 degrees above the horizontal.

As I looked an empty (that is, driverless) black coloured bicycle moved quite rapidly from right to left across my line of vision! It was travelling quite quickly but I swear I can`t recall seeing anyone on it. I wonder if this is a case for any revived X Files T.V. programme?!

Peculiar Rabbit



THREE LEGGED RABBITS.

We have this week, through favour of Mrs. Ridler, of the Lower George Inn, in this city, visited a litter of rabbits, of most extraordinary deformity; consisting of *ten* in number, two only of which are perfect; two have no ears, two but one ear each, two have only three legs each, and two others are blind. They are all living.— *Gloucester Herald.*

Cabinet of Curiosities Vol 1 No 27 p. 432
(printed for J.Limberd, London 1824)

Thanks to Bob Skinner

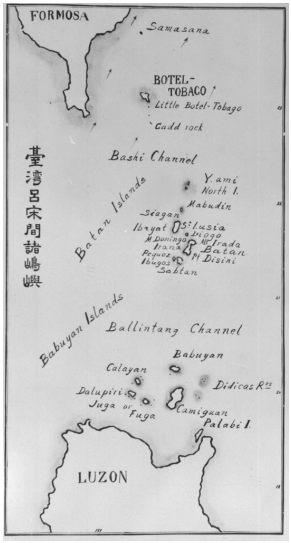
Odd Flying Lizards in the Philippines

This case was passed on to me by German Fortean researcher and editor of the BILK Newsletter Ulrich Magin:

According to the book `Secret Cities of South America` (very difficult to read says Ulrich!) by Harold T.Wilkins on page 331 : " No fishermen will go near the place. Not only do they swear it`s haunted; but there are queer flying lizards there." " The place" being an island in the Bashi Channel in the Philippines, between Taiwan and the Philippines.

Right:

Wikipedia Commons. Old Map of Luzon Strait. Torii Ryūzō (1870-1953)



Giant green moth on the Isle of Wight

On August 14th 2017 I overheard a man mentioning that he`d seen, in the 1980s, a green moth on the Isle of Wight measuring six inches wide.

Chinese skeletons in a Roman tomb

In 2016 the U.K media reported the story of how two Chinese skeletons had been found in a Roman tomb in Southwark, London. The online Independent newspaper reported in September 2016 that archaeologists had examined dental enamel from over twenty sets of human remains dated from between the 2nd and 4th centuries A.D. “Dr Rebecca Redfern, curator of human osteology at the Museum of London, revealed two of the skeletons found at the site in Lant Street, Southwark had been identified as possibly being of Chinese origin. "This is absolutely phenomenal. This is the first time in Roman Britain we've identified people with Asian ancestry and only the 3rd or 4th in the empire as a whole, she told BBC Radio 4's The World at One.” (1)

Perhaps the Roman and Chinese empires had more connection than previously thought?

1.http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/chinese-skeleton-discovery-roman-history-society-southwark-cemetery-asian-

Albuquerque Journal (New Mexico) July 22nd 1922

Yes , the same Roswell...

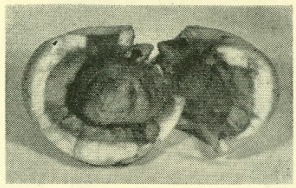
This entire product and/or portions thereof are copyrighted by NewsBank and/or the American Antiquarian Society. 2004. Source: Genealogybank.com

MONSTER FREAK EGGS PRODUCED BY ROSWELL HEN

Roswell, N. M., July 21.—An egg measuring seven and a quarter inches around the small way, and nine and a quarter inches the long way, is on display in the chamber of commerce windows. It was laid by a Plymouth Rock hen owned by Mrs. W. H. Allison, who lives north of the city. The egg has a perfect shell, with the exception of a small hole through which may be seen another perfectly formed egg inside the larger shell. In all the long years of poultry experience in the Pecos valley this is the greatest freak yet produced.

Apple inside an Apple

The Countryman Spring 1957



Apple within an apple

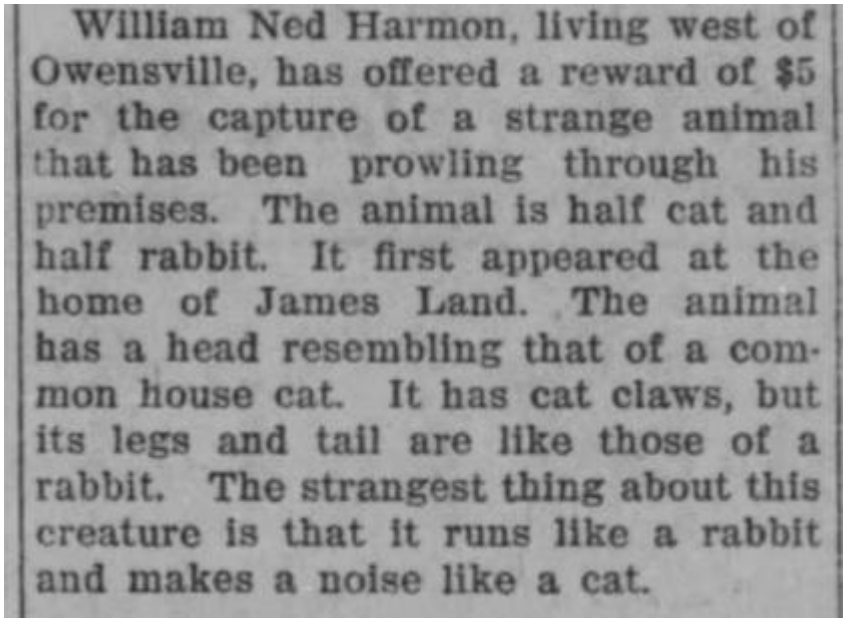
fairly common on some species, is very rare on the Corsican pine. — *Maurice Nimmo, Hants*

DOUBLE APPLE. When a workman at Chipping Campden bit into this apple he found a second one inside it. The size, shape and colour were those of a James Grieve. — *Ernest E. Lockyer, Glos.* [W. M. Campbell, Curator of Kew Gardens, writes: 'This is probably due to the abnormality known as proliferation, which affects flowers and fruits in various ways. With apples and pears there are known examples where one fruit is surmounted by another, this being generally thought to be due to a dilatation of the peduncle below the fruit, giving rise to two fruits superimposed; the lower one is imperfect and has no seeds. We can find no record, however, of one fruit forming within another. If any reader comes across a similar abnormality, we should be interested to see it'.]

The Argos Reflector, Indiana February 24th 1910

From Kay Coggin

Half cat Half Rabbit?



William Ned Harmon, living west of Owensville, has offered a reward of $5 for the capture of a strange animal that has been prowling through his premises. The animal is half cat and half rabbit. It first appeared at the home of James Land. The animal has a head resembling that of a common house cat. It has cat claws, but its legs and tail are like those of a rabbit. The strangest thing about this creature is that it runs like a rabbit and makes a noise like a cat.

Cat with three heads

A Cat With Three Heads.

Morristown, N. J., Sept. 9.—Robert Finlaysen, who is employed as a coachman by Emory McClintock, actuary of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, who lives in Mt. Kimble avenue, this city, is the possessor of a curious freak of nature in the shape of a well developed cat with three heads.

The feline was born last night. The body is ordinary in size, and is black in color. The cat promises to live.

Source and date unknown

Letters and E mails

This letter below was actually written to me on May 11th 2012 by correspondent Richard George but I thought it interesting enough to include here. I hope you do too.

Dear Richard,

RE *Notes and Queries* in *FS 2*...

I`ve never heard of lepidopterophobia with butterflies of British dimensions, although I can certainly imagine people being afraid of tropical ones.

Moths, on the other hand...both my mother and I are distinctly uneasy with them. In Mum`s case, it stems from a childhood encounter with the rare Death`s Head Hawkmoth, *Acherontia atropos,* in an overgrown garden in Birkenhead. I had a similar not-quite-panic attack a few years ago in my home when confronted with an Old Lady Moth , *Mormo maura*. It appeared from nowhere on my landing and seemed to chase me around.

And yet this moth (*Mormo maura)* was little different in size to a butterfly. Do we tend to fear moths more because of their association with night? Or is it, to paraphrase George Harrison, something in the way they move?

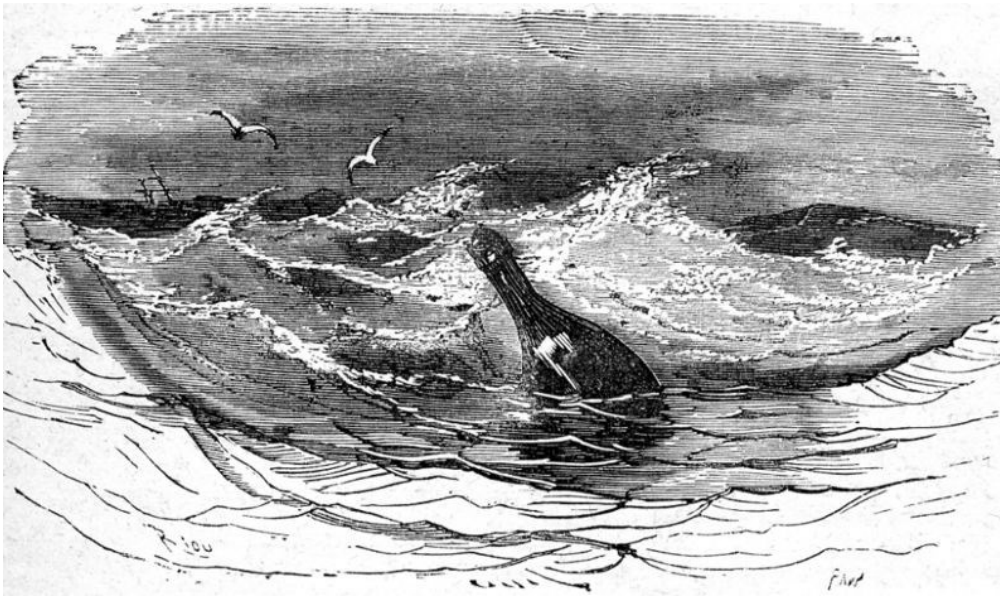
Now I`m off and running on music, one of the great lines of all times is Jim Morrison`s " The scream of the butterfly…" from *When The Music`s Over*. That *is* scary.

Coming in Mid 2018

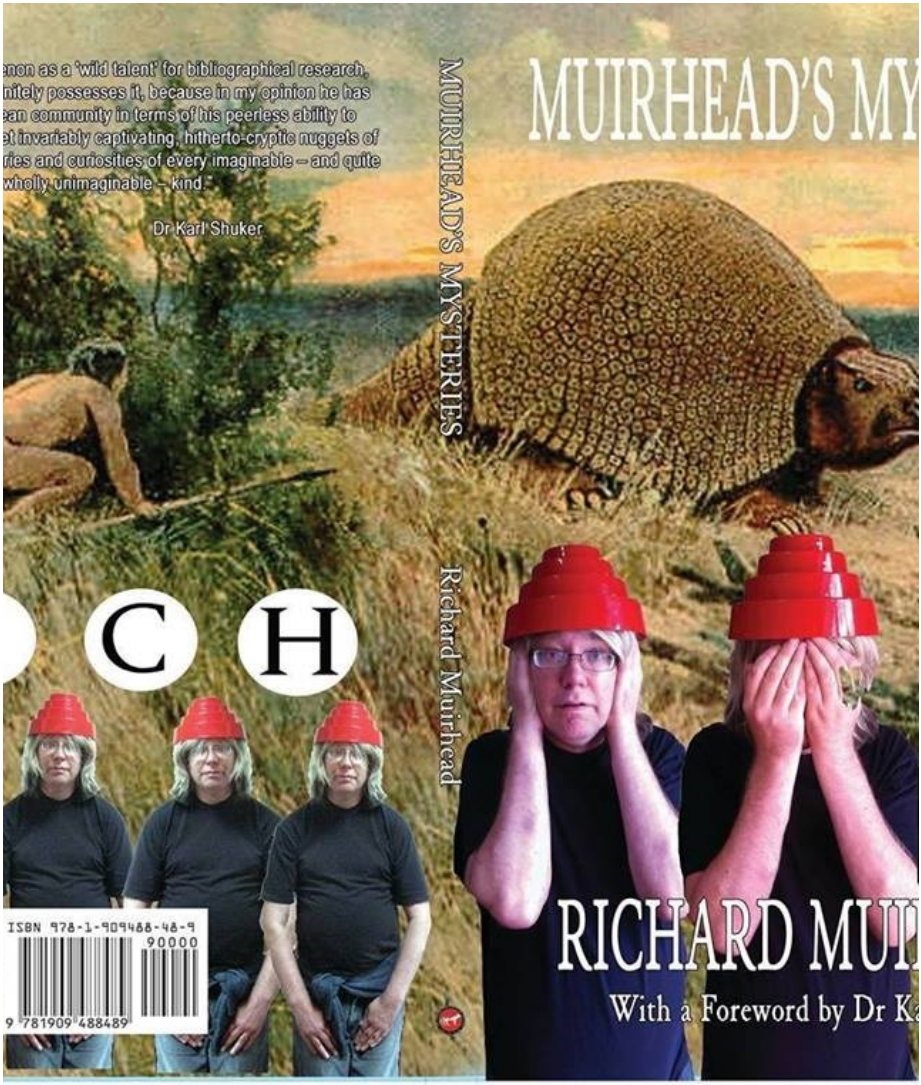
Flying Snake occasional Paper no 1

Messages in Bottles

A Comprehensive Survey



Wikipedia Commons. From the children of Captain Grant by Edouard Riou. June 23rd 1868.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